

a decade; the Palestinian prisoners only became known when the Syrian government released them in 1995. On the basis of this experience with Syria, it is quite possible that these Israeli MIAs are still alive and under Syrian control.

Mr. Speaker, I have chosen to introduce this legislation today because this day holds great significance for the Jewish people. Today is the first day of the month of Nissan on the Jewish calendar. Nissan is a very important month because Jews from around the world celebrate Passover and join with their families in the observance of the holiday of freedom in this month.

It is in the spirit of this month that I ask my colleagues in the Congress to join me in helping Zachary Baumel, Tzvi Feldman, and Yehuda Katz return to their homes. Sitting in the gallery today is Mrs. Miriam Baumel, Zachary Baumel's mother, whose tireless efforts on behalf of H.R. 1175 are a testament of her deep love for her son and her strong support for this legislation. Miriam and husband, Yona, have visited communities across the country and have met with numerous Members of Congress and congressional staff in their tireless effort to rally support for their son and to end this family tragedy.

I have confidence in this house's ability to do what is right. Mr. Speaker. The Baumel, Feldman, and Katz families should not have to spend one more night worrying about the fate of Zachary, Tzvi, and Yehuda.

H.R. 1175 directs the Department of State to raise the fate of these Israeli soldiers with the Palestinian Authority and leaders of the governments of Syria, Lebanon, and other countries in the Middle East in an effort to locate and secure the return of these soldiers. This legislation also specifies that U.S. aid to these governments "should take into consideration the willingness of these governments and authorities to assist in locating and securing the return of these soldiers." The State Department is directed to report to the Congress concerning these efforts.

Mr. Speaker, our legislation is introduced in the hope that we can find answers to the questions that have haunted the Baumel, Katz, and Feldman families for almost 17 years. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and help to put an end to this tragedy.

H.R. 1175

To locate and secure the return of Zachary Baumel, an American Citizen, and other Israeli soldiers missing in action.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that

A. Zachary Baumel, an American citizen serving in the Israeli military forces, has been missing in action since June 1982 when he was captured by forces affiliated with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) following a tank battle with Syrian forces at Sultan Ya'akub in Lebanon;

B. Yehuda Katz and Zvi Feldman, Israeli citizens serving in the Israeli military forces, have been missing in action since June 1982 when they were also captured by these same forces in a tank battle with Syrian forces at Sultan Ya'akub in Lebanon;

C. These three soldiers were last known to be in the hands of a Palestinian faction splintered from the PLO and operating in Syrian-controlled territory, thus making

this a matter within the responsibility of the government of Syria;

D. Diplomatic efforts to secure their release have been unsuccessful, although PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat delivered one half of Zachary Baumel's dog tag to Israeli government authorities; and

E. In the Gaza-Jericho agreement between the Palestinian Authority and the government of Israel of May 4, 1994, Palestinian officials agreed to cooperate with Israel in locating and working for the return of Israeli soldiers missing in action.

SEC. 2. ACTION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

A. The Department of State shall raise the matter of Zachary Baumel, Yehuda Katz and Zvi Feldman on an urgent basis with appropriate government officials of Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinian Authority, and with other governments in the region and other governments elsewhere which in the Department's view may be helpful in locating and securing the return of these soldiers.

B. Decisions with regard to United States economic and other forms of assistance to Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinian Authority, and other governments in the region and United States policy towards these governments and authorities should take into consideration the willingness of these governments and authorities to assist in locating and securing the return of these soldiers.

SEC. 3. REPORT BY THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

A. Ninety days after the enactment of this legislation, the Department of State shall deliver a report in writing to the Congress detailing its consultations with governments pursuant to section 2(A) of this act and United States policies affected pursuant to section 2(B) of this act. This report shall be a public document. The report may include a classified annex.

B. After the initial report to the Congress, the Department of State shall report in writing within 15 days whenever any additional information from any source relating to these individuals arises. Such report shall be a public document. The report may include a classified annex.

C. The reports to the Congress identified in paragraph (A) and (B) above shall be made to the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives and to the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate.

A SALUTE TO WILLIAM JOHNSON

HON. THOMAS M. BARRETT

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to share with my colleagues my esteem and regard for William Johnson, Business Manager of Laborers Union Local 113 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. On March 20, his family, friends, union brothers and sisters, and admirers will gather to celebrate Bill Johnson's over 40 years of service to Milwaukee workers and to wish him well as his life begins a new chapter.

Bill returned to his native Alabama in 1955, an honorably discharged veteran of the United States Army. He stayed only a couple of weeks before he agreed to join his brother in Milwaukee.

When he arrived in Milwaukee, Bill Johnson found work, but he did not immediately find union representation. During the early days of America's struggle for civil rights, many of the

union locals in town were not admitting African Americans. When he joined the Laborers' paving local that would eventually become Local 113, he had found a home.

Bill Johnson rose through the ranks to the position of Business Manager, ultimately responsible for contract negotiation and administration, personnel, and all of the union's other business. He has also served as Union Trustee for 30 years and is a trustee of the Laborers' Employers Cooperation Education Trust.

As a leader, Bill Johnson earned the respect of Local membership. He led by example, with dedication to the welfare and professional advancement of the membership. He always remembered that a successful union draws strength from its members just as they draw strength from the union.

After over 40 years, Bill Johnson is retiring as Business Manager of Laborers Local 113. His retirement from organized labor does not mean an end to his public service. Bill has been a longtime leader at Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, and he presides over the church's economic and community development corporations. Under his direction, I know that these organizations will continue to work vigorously to bring housing and economic opportunity to Milwaukee's central city. Bill has also been active in leadership positions in the Milwaukee Jobs Initiative, the United Way of Greater Milwaukee, and Campaign for a Sustainable Milwaukee.

I am proud to join his colleagues, his friends, and his many admirers in expressing my gratitude to Bill Johnson for a lifetime of devoted service to Milwaukee's working families. I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting Bill and wishing him well as he embarks on a new course.

TRIBUTE TO THE BROOKLYN IRISH-AMERICAN PARADE COMMITTEE

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to invite my colleagues to pay tribute to the Brooklyn Irish-American Parade Committee on the occasion of its 24th Annual Brooklyn Irish-American Parade.

The Brooklyn Irish-American Parade highlights the cultural, education and historical accomplishments and contributions of Brooklyn's Irish-American community. The Annual Brooklyn Irish-American Parade serves as a celebration of Brooklyn's cultural diversity and richness and takes place in historic Park Slope on the hallowed ground of the Battle of Brooklyn and commemorates the Marylanders, Irish Freedom Fighters and Americans of other ethnic backgrounds who gave their lives to secure independence for all Americans. The Spirit of '76 was, and still is, the ideal of the Brooklyn Irish-American Parade.

The Parade Committee, its officers and members, continue the memorialization of "The Great Famine" (An Gorta Mor) which caused the deaths of over 1,500,000 people in Ireland and tens of thousands as they traveled to America. During "The Great Famine", over 1,000,000 of Erin's sons and daughters emigrated to the United States through the port of New York.